

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
CULTURAL AFFAIRS

IOWA ARTS COUNCIL PRODUCE IOWA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

IOWA HISTORIAN

NEWSLETTER OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

Surf Ballroom Designated National Historic Landmark

Strike up the band! The **Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake**, Iowa, has been declared a National Historic Landmark. After months of anticipation, the U.S. Department of the Interior made the announcement last month and recognized the Surf's enduring role in the history of American music.



The ballroom is best known, of course, for hosting the last concert of Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and J.P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson before their fatal plane crash in the early hours of Feb. 3, 1959, a date Don McLean immortalized as "the day the music died" in his 1971 hit "American Pie."

"The Surf Ballroom is a national treasure. You can almost feel the energy and hear the echoes of all the concerts over the years," said Chris Kramer, who directs the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. "The soundtrack of the 20th century played live, right here in Clear Lake, Iowa."

As the most significant and well-preserved venue remaining on the 1959 Winter Dance Party Tour, the ballroom represents the nationwide dance-party tour phenomenon, a trend that helped establish touring as a legitimate business within the music industry.

[READ ALL ABOUT IT](#)

Iowa History 101 Webinars

Our year-long commemoration of **Iowa's 175th Anniversary** continues this month with two new "Iowa History 101" webinars.

Immigration to Iowa

Feb. 11, noon-1 p.m.

Iowa State University Professor Jeff Bremer will talk about immigration to Iowa in the 19th and 20th centuries and share

personal stories of immigrants.

Iowa's Black Migration: Into, Around, Out Of, and Back Again

Feb. 25, noon-1 p.m.

Genealogist Ricki King, owner of Roots to Branches Genealogy, will present a journey of Iowa's Black history illustrating the reasons why people or families moved in and out of Iowa from the beginning of its statehood.



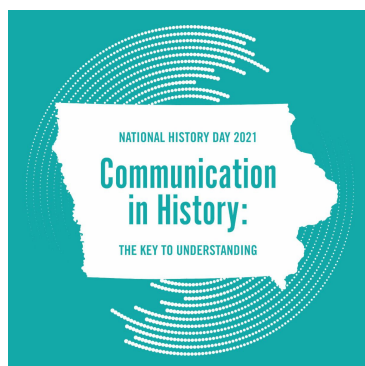
[LEARN MORE](#)

Black History Spotlight: A Union Hall in Waterloo

A labor union hall in Waterloo tells the story, in brick and mortar, of the organization's role in the struggle for racial equality in the workplace. The meatpacking union affiliated with the Rath Packing Company built the hall in 1954, and for Black workers, especially, it "represented a place of profound possibility, a place where they could realize dreams for social justice in the workplace and community," according to the historian Bruce Fehn. The building now houses a church, but its history is part of the State Historic Preservation Office's **ongoing survey** of places and stories of the African American struggle for Civil Rights in Iowa during the 20th century.



[READ THE BLOG](#)



SIGN UP!

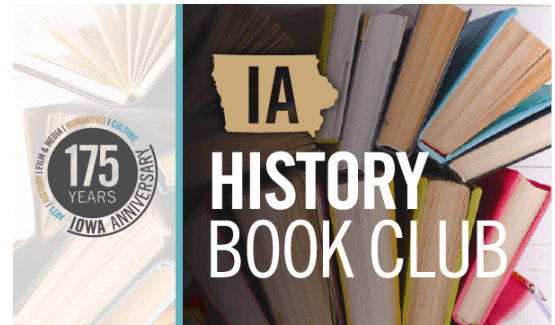
Judges Needed for National History Day

Virtual volunteers needed! We are looking for judges to evaluate student projects for the 2021 **National History Day in Iowa** virtual contest season.

Haven't volunteered before? No problem! Judges work in teams and receive online training before the contest. **Judges can sign up** and select a district contest that works best for their schedule. If you have questions, please contact **vania.boland@iowa.gov**.

Join the Iowa History Book Club

The history of Iowa has been captured and chronicled in numerous books throughout the decades. Dive into a few of the best with the new **Iowa History Book Club**, led by Annals of Iowa Editor Andrew Klumpp. The club's first quarterly, online discussion is set for 7 p.m. March 11, when we'll discuss "**Iowa: The Middle Land**" by the legendary historian Dorothy Schwieder.



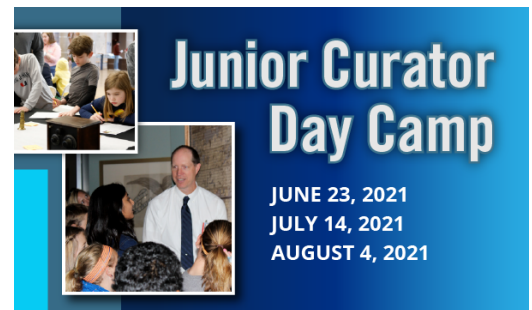
[LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

Register for Summer Programs Now



Young Writers' Workshop

The **Young Writers' Workshop** returns this summer for a week of exciting adventure. Students entering grades 7-12 will work with a nationally known young adult author to hone and refine their writing skills using artifacts, exercises, research and storytelling tips. The students will end the week by giving a performance of their stories. The five-day workshop is set for **June 14-18**.



Junior Curator Day Camp

Young historians in grades 4-6 can learn what it takes to run a museum during the **Junior Curator Day Camp**. They'll explore the role of curators, conservators and exhibition designers by investigating artifacts, exploring the State Historical Museum of Iowa's collection and learning about Iowa history. Students also will design their own exhibit. The single-day camps are offered **June 23**, **July 14** or **Aug. 4**.

[REGISTER NOW!](#)

SHSI Board Nominations Due March 1

The State Historical Society of Iowa is accepting nominations for members to serve on its **board of trustees**. **Nominations** can be submitted by anyone, but nominees must be members of the

State Historical Society of Iowa, willing to attend five meetings per year and serve on various committees. **Nominations are due March 1.**

**STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA**
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[LEARN MORE](#)

Underrepresented Community Grant Program



The National Park Service's State, Tribal, Local, Plans & Grants Division is accepting applications for its **Underrepresented Community Grant Program**, which works towards diversifying the nominations submitted to the National Register of Historic Places. Projects include surveys and inventories of historic properties associated with communities underrepresented in the National Register as well as the development of nominations to the National Register for specific sites. **Applications are due March 31.**

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

Grant Funding for Sacred Places

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is accepting applications for its National Fund for Sacred Places program, which offers grants up to \$250,000 for projects. During the four years of the program, 52 facilities have received more than \$10 million to support projects ranging from steeple stabilization to exterior masonry repair to HVAC replacement.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a privately funded nonprofit organization that works to save America's historic sites, tell the full American story, build stronger communities and invest in preservation's future. **Letters of intent are due March 15.**

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

Prairie School Architecture Virtual Class and Tours



Feb. 9: Virtual Class

In the first half of the 20th century, Iowa played a major role in the development of Prairie School of architecture. This webinar will explore some of Iowa's internationally renowned Prairie School buildings, including the Woodbury County Courthouse, homes in Mason City's Rock Crest-Rock Glen neighborhood, and other buildings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Burley Griffin and others. **The class will be led by Paula Mohr of the State Historic Preservation Office and Ryan Ellsworth of the American Institute of Architects.**

Feb.16: Virtual Tour 1

The Meier House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, in Monona

Virtually tour the only Iowa example of the American System-Built House designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Join homeowners Jason Loper and Michael Schreiber as they share stories of finding and restoring this beautiful home, a result of Wright's lifelong interest in affordable housing. The tour will be followed by a Q&A with the homeowners and instructors.

Feb. 23: Virtual Tours 2 & 3

The Schneider & Page Houses, designed by Walter Burley Griffin, in Mason City

Virtually tour two homes in Mason City's Rock Crest-Rock Glen development, the first planned Prairie School development in the country. Homeowners Tim and Joan Platz and Gary and Anne Schmit will take you through their amazing homes. A Q&A session with the homeowners will follow.

[LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

Programs & Events

Extended to May 9: [Iowa Culture Mobile app featured Tour: 20 Artists, 20 Parks](#)

Feb. 6: [History Mystery: Live from the Museum Vault](#)

Feb. 9: [The Prairie School in Iowa Virtual Class](#)

Feb. 11: [Iowa History 101: Immigration to Iowa](#)

Feb. 16: [The Prairie School in Iowa Virtual Tour 1](#)

Feb. 23: [The Prairie School in Iowa Virtual Tour 2 & 3](#)

Feb. 25: [Iowa History 101: Iowa's Black Migration: Into, Around, Out Of, and Back Again](#)

March 6: [History Mystery: Live from the Museum Vault](#)

March 11: [Iowa History Book Club](#)

April 3: **History Mystery: Live from the Museum Vault**

May 1: **History Mystery: Live from the Museum Vault**

June 14-18: **Young Writers' Workshop**

June 23: **Junior Curator Day Camp**

July 14: **Junior Curator Day Camp**

Aug. 4: **Junior Curator Day Camp**

Grants & Nominations

Feb. 15: **National Preservation Awards, National Trust for Historic Preservation**

March 1: **State Historical Society of Iowa Board of Trustees Nominations**

March 1: **Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors, National Trust for Historic Preservation**

March 1: **Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation, National Trust for Historic Preservation**

Please check our online calendar for more events and opportunities across the state.

VISIT OUR CALENDAR

BECOME A MEMBER

VOLUNTEER

